

February 2026 | ISSUE #52

# Patient and Family Advisory Council

Cuthbert Lab & Oncology Outcomes

## Welcome

Welcome to our February edition! Thank you to the PFAC members who were able to join the council meeting earlier this month and provide valuable insights on some exciting new projects. This month, we are preparing several submissions for the upcoming Canadian Institutes of Health Research Spring Project Grant Competition. Thank you for being part of our community and for your continued interest in the work we do.

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# Research Highlights

## Oncology Outcomes

A retrospective database analysis to understand treatment patterns and outcomes of intermediate and advanced hepatocellular carcinoma in Alberta, Canada (A-CAPTAIN study)

### STUDY PURPOSE AND METHODS

With advancements in the systemic treatment landscape for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), this study aimed to establish a **baseline of treatment patterns and outcomes in real-world HCC patients** receiving treatment prior to 2021 (pre-immunotherapy).



This consisted of a **retrospective observational cohort study** for patients fulfilling the following criteria:



- Diagnosed with **intermediate** or **advanced** HCC.
- Received at least one dose of systemic therapy between **January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2020**.
- Received treatment in the Canadian province of **Alberta**.

### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPACT

- ★ Patient characteristics, treatment patterns, overall survival (OS), real-world progression-free survival (rwPFS), clinician-assessed response rates (RRs), and reasons for treatment discontinuation were retrospectively analyzed in all patients (N=321).
- ★ For intermediate (n=33) and advanced (n= 288) patients, **RRs to first-line systemic therapy were 13% and 19%, median rwPFS was 7.4 and 4.2 months, and median OS was 13.5 and 10.9 months, respectively.**

These findings establish a **pre-immunotherapy benchmark** that will inform evaluation of future systemic treatment advances.



[Click here for full article.](#)

## Cuthbert Lab

### LIVING WITH PARADOX: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COLORECTAL CANCER PATIENTS' EXPERIENCES IN MANAGING THEIR HEALTH AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Colleen Cuthbert, Janine Farragher, Christie Farrer, Winson Cheung

#### Purpose & Methods

##### Objective

The purpose of this study was to explore how colorectal cancer (CRC) survivors manage their health post-treatment.

##### Why This Matters

Survivors often face long-term physical, emotional, and social challenges. Understanding their experiences can help shape patient-centered supportive care.

##### Methods

This study used a qualitative approach, conducting focus groups and individual interviews with 19 post-treatment colorectal cancer survivors. Data was analyzed using Thorne's Interpretive Description method.

#### Findings & Conclusions

##### Main Theme:

##### *Living with paradox*

CRC survivors face ups and downs, balancing loss and growth, uncertainty and acceptance in the post-treatment phase when managing their health.

##### Conclusion

These survivor experiences depict how health journeys are not linear and often fluctuate. Thus, cancer care systems must be flexible and patient-centered to help survivors thrive post-treatment.



## Study #1

# Study Recruitment



### What is the study about?

Head and neck cancer (HNC) treatment is often associated with physical and psychosocial burdens. Your participation will be used to understand the views of participants when it comes to difficulties involved on social isolation and loneliness during HNC treatment

### What is involved?

Participate in an interview (**approximately 60 minutes**) to share your thoughts and views on social isolation and loneliness during cancer treatment

### Who is eligible?

Individuals diagnosed with HNC as an adult and had completed treatment for at least 1 year



This study has received ethics approval from the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta HREBA.CC-24-0468  
**Contact us at [laisrenata.cezariosa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:laisrenata.cezariosa@ucalgary.ca) to join!**



## Study #2

### Join Our Research Study!

#### Sociodemographic and Psychosocial Patient and Physician Factors in Oncology Treatment Decision-Making

#### What?

We want to understand how the background, experiences, and personal beliefs of patients and physicians affect the way they make treatment decisions together AND how these decisions impact patient's health. Share your experiences in a focus group with us!

#### Who?

- 18 years old or over
- Living in Alberta
- Received a cancer diagnosis within the past 2 years
- Referred to a medical oncologist for a chemotherapy assessment



Contact us at [cacuthbe@ucalgary.ca](mailto:cacuthbe@ucalgary.ca)

This study has received ethics approval from the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta (HREBA.CC-25-0065). Contact HREBA at 780-423-5727. This poster was created in accordance with the HREBA.CC-25-0065-Patient ICF\_V1 documented on February 10, 2025.



## Coming Up



The next newsletter will release in March 2025.

Previous issues of the PFAC newsletter have been posted online:

<https://www.cuthbertlab.com/advisory-council>



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